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**State Agricultural Development Board Approves \$50,000 for  
Mason County Cattle Genetics Improvement Program**

The Kentucky Agricultural Development Board voted today to approve a \$50,000 grant request submitted by the Mason County Cattleman's Association to establish a local cattle genetics improvement program. The award will reimburse half of the costs incurred by eligible Mason County cattle producers who choose to improve the genetic stock of their herds through the purchase of approved bulls or bull semen. The application was reviewed by the Mason County Agricultural Development Council and forwarded to the state board as a high priority item. Funds come from \$817,650 set aside for Mason County in the Agricultural Development Fund established with half of Kentucky's tobacco settlement proceeds.

The Mason County Cattleman's Association will administer the program locally. Eligibility criteria and genetics standards were established by the state Agricultural Development Board in a standard genetics improvement program approved at the Board's February meeting. Governor Patton praised the Board's action to boost the efforts of cattle producers in Mason County to explore alternatives to replace lost tobacco income.

The award was made as one of 23 projects approved by the Board during its meeting today. The Board approved a total of \$593,423 in state level projects, and \$1,265,877 in a variety of county-level programs, including the Mason County Cattle Genetics Improvement Program.

The Mason County Cattleman's Association will announce implementation of the local program in the near future. Producers will apply directly to the local entity to participate in the program. The commitment by the Board comes at just the time that cattle producers are purchasing new bulls for their cattle herds.